

Letter Asks Congressional Leaders to Authorize Policy Change, Saving State Millions in Recovery Costs

June 10, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (LA-03) sent a letter today to House Appropriations Chairman David Obey today requesting that Congress reduce Louisiana's cost share for recovery projects from Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Currently, Louisiana and the local sponsors are required to pay 25% of the cost for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and rebuilding projects resulting from the two 2008 hurricanes. As Rep. Melancon noted in his letter, the storms dramatically reduced local government revenues. Community budgets across south Louisiana have been stretched to the breaking point as local officials struggle to cover both recovery costs and normal day-to-day expenses. *Letter Asks Congressional Leaders to Authorize Policy Change, Saving State Millions in Recovery Costs*
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"Under your leadership, Congress adjusted the cost share for recovery and rebuilding activities after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," Rep. Melancon wrote Chairman Obey. "This was extremely helpful to local communities that were struggling to make the non-federal [local] share."

Rep. Melancon continued, "On behalf of my constituents, who have endured four devastating storms in three years, I ask that you consider adjusting Hurricanes Gustav and Ike cost shares. This would be tremendously helpful to the State and our efforts to fully and quickly rebuild from these storms."

Following Hurricanes Gustav and Ike last September, Rep. Melancon [sent a letter](#) to the President asking him to waive Louisiana's local cost share for disaster assistance and recovery projects resulting from the two storms. While President Bush waived the cost share for Texas, Louisiana's match has not yet been waived. Click

[here](#)

to view Rep. Melancon's letter from last fall.

Over the past four years, Rep. Melancon has worked in Congress to further reduce the financial burden on local governments in south Louisiana following major hurricanes. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, he partnered with the Louisiana delegation and Congressional leadership to waive the local cost share requirement for disaster recovery projects. Rep. Melancon worked with House leadership to include a waiver of the entire cost share in the 2007

Iraq/Katrina Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President at the end of May 2007.

Prior to passage of the 2007 Supplemental, the local cost share requirement had been waived 32 times since 1985 when per capita rebuilding costs were deemed excessive, but had not yet been waived for Katrina and Rita. Before the local cost share was waved, many of the estimated 23,000 disaster recovery projects in Louisiana had been put on hold because local governments did not have the resources to provide the match.

Click [here](#) to see Rep. Melancon's letter to Chairman Obey.

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